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News Release

NEWS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Oxford Vaccine Group uses ProtoCOL 3 automated colony counting system *to rapidly and accurately determine potency of meningitis vaccines*

Cambridge, UK: Synbiosis, a long-established, expert manufacturer of automated microbiological systems, is pleased to announce its ProtoCOL 3 automated colony counter is being used at a world-renowned UK vaccine research facility, the Oxford Vaccine Group to speed up throughput of their vaccine testing programmes.

Microbiologists in the Oxford Vaccine Group at the University of Oxford are using a ProtoCOL 3 to count colonies on their post SBA (serum bactericidal antibody) assay test plates to rapidly determine each vaccine's potency from colony counts. Using the ProtoCOL 3 is helping this group's immunologists to significantly increase their throughput when determining the efficacy of vaccines against capsular group B meningococcal bacteria, a major cause of childhood meningitis.

Dr Christina Dold, Research Assistant at the Oxford Vaccine Group explained: "We used to perform the counts of our plates after SBA by eye using a light box and a pen to count around 60-120 tiny colonies per streak in six streaks on each plate. This was quite difficult work, taking hours to complete and input the data. We needed to increase our throughput, as we are being asked to take on larger assessments of clinical and pre-clinical vaccines and as a result had to automate colony counting."

Christina added: "We were recommended the ProtoCOL 3 by a reputable American meningococcal vaccine research group. We tested the system and were so impressed with its performance that we decided it was exactly right for our research. Using the ProtoCOL 3 has totally changed the way we work, we can now count around 300 SBA agar plates per day, as well as generate results on vaccine potency, something which would have taken us a week to do manually."

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"Manual colony counting and result recording are tedious, error prone activities if undertaken on a large scale," commented Kate George, Divisional Manager at Synbiosis, "and are areas where the ProtoCOL 3 is helping immunologists in the prestigious Oxford Vaccine Group to make productivity step changes with their testing. Their application of these powerful technologies demonstrates that the ProtoCOL 3 automated colony counter is an intelligent choice for forward thinking research institutes and pharma companies that need to significantly speed up vaccine testing to prevent life-threatening diseases."

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Note to Editors

About Synbiosis

Synbiosis is a world-leading supplier of integrated imaging solutions for automatic counting and analysis of microbial colonies and zone measurement. The ProtoCOL and åCOLyte systems from Synbiosis are installed in food, pharmaceutical, environmental and research microbiology laboratories world-wide. Synbiosis uses established distribution channels to market its products internationally.

Synbiosis, founded in 1998 is a division of the Synoptics Group of the AIM quoted Scientific Digital Imaging Company based in Cambridge, UK. The Group's other divisions, Syncroscopy and Syngene, specialise in digital imaging solutions for microscopy and molecular biology applications respectively. Synoptics, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary of being in business in 2015, currently employs 40 people in its UK and subsidiary operation in Frederick, USA.

About the Oxford Vaccine Group

The Oxford Vaccine Group (OVG) conducts studies of new and improved vaccines for adults and children and is based in the Department of Paediatrics in the University of Oxford at the Oxford Vaccine Centre, and is led by Professor Andrew J Pollard. OVG was founded in 1994 by Professor E. Richard Moxon and established offices in the Department of Paediatrics, University of Oxford, John Radcliffe Hospital before moving to the Centre for

Clinical Vaccinology and Tropical Medicine (CCVTM) in the University of Oxford at the Churchill Hospital in 2003.

The multidisciplinary group, led by Professor Pollard since 2001, includes two Consultants in Vaccinology, a Director of Clinical Trials, a Senior Clinical Trials Manager, adult and paediatric clinical research fellows, adult and paediatric research nurses, project managers, statisticians, QA manager, IT manager, and an administration team. The OVG laboratory includes post-doctoral scientists, research assistants and DPhil students. Wider group members include professionals from a range of specialities including immunologists, microbiologists, epidemiologists, a community paediatrician, the local Health Protection team and a bioethicist.

OVG is a UKCRC registered clinical trials unit working in collaboration with the Primary Care trials unit at the University (registration number: 52). For more information see: http://www.ukcrc-ctu.org.uk/